DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 300 FL 023 696

AUTHOR	Galbraith, Paul; Anstrom, Kris
TITLE	Peer Coaching: An Effective Staff Development Model for Educators of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students.
INSTITUTION	National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	95
CONTRACT	T292008001
NOTE	10p.; For other issues in this series, see FL 023 694-701.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Information Analyses (070)
JOURNAL CIT	Directions in Language and Education; v1 n3 Spr 1995
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Bilingual Education; *Collegiality; Cooperative Learning; *English (Second Language); Faculty Development; Interpersonal Relationship; Mentors; Models; Organizational Development; Peer Influence; Peer Relationship; Second Language Learning; *Staff Development; *Teacher Improvement; Teaching Skills; *Team Teaching

ABSTRACT

Peer coaching develops from a leadership role on the part of educators of linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students, together with an interdisciplinary cooperation between bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL) and mainstream staff. Peer coaching is a professional development method in which teachers share their expertise and provide one another with feedback, support, and assistance for refining present skills, learning new skills, or solving classroom-related problems; it can also include in-class training by a supportive peer. Peer coaching is an ongoing process. Benefits include formation of relationships to coordinate the knowledge and skills needed to help LCD students effectively, improvement in teaching, and development of a more positive outlook towards LCD students by mainstream teachers. Peer coaching programs can be initiated by two teachers jointly planning instruction segments or by assigning a more skilled teacher to teach others. Four working models of peer coaching are described in detail: technical, collegial, challenge, and team. Factors to be considered before implementing a coaching system are listed, and coaching program implementation strategy steps are offered. Six specific strategies for low-cost coaching arrangements are suggested. (Contains 23 references.) (NAV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 394 300

Directions in Language & Education

Vol. 1 No. 3 Spring 1995

Peer Coaching: An Effective Staff Development Model for Educators of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joel Gomez

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL 023 699

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Directions
IN LANGUAGE & EDUCATION

Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 1995

PEER COACHING: AN EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR EDUCATORS OF LINGUISTICALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

by Paul Galbraith and Kris Anstrom

What is the role of staff development?

The passage of the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) has highlighted the need for integrated, teacher-driven, long-term professional development for all staff involved in the education of linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students. This emphasis is exemplified in Title XIII of IASA, which authorizes technical assistance and dissemination efforts that assist in "integrating into a coherent strategy for improving teaching and learning" various staff development programs and other education reform efforts (Improving America's Schools Act, Title XIII, sec. 13001, 1994). Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education has developed a set of principles for professional development that not only stress high quality, integrated training, but also recognize the leadership role teachers must assume in their own training (*TESOL Matters,* February/March 1995).

This leadership role on the part of educators of LCD students, along with interdisciplinary cooperation between bilingual/English as a second language (ESL) and mainstream staff, is critical for the effective education of LCD students. For too long, the education of these students has been perceived as the domain of only a small group of specialized individuals, namely ESL and bilingual teachers. This perception has often led to the isolation of LCD students from the rest of the school and the provision of a separate curriculum for those students.

What type of staff development is needed to improve collaboration between mainstream and bilingual/ESL staff?

District administrators must offer mainstream classroom teachers a wide array of staff development activities that revolve around the education of LCD students. These can include training in theoretical areas such as second language learning and bilingualism, as well as practical suggestions for sheltering English instruction, integrating the teaching of content areas and ESL, and cooperative learning. In addition, training should be teacher-driven, as is the case with a peer coaching model of staff development.

FL023696

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION NCBE

What is peer coaching?

Peer coaching is defined as a professional development method that has been shown to increase collegiality and improve teaching. It is a confidential process through which teachers share their expertise and provide one another with feedback, support, and assistance for the purpose of refining present skills, learning new skills, and/or solving classroom-related problems (Dalton and Moir, 1991). Peer coaching also refers to in-class training by a supportive peer who helps the teacher apply skills learned in a workshop. Coached teachers experience significant positive changes in their behaviors, when provided with an appropriate program that insures accountability, support, companionship, and specific feedback over an extended period of time. Coaching is an ongoing process that involves a training stage followed by extensions of that training. One model describes five functions of successful peer coaching:

- COMPANIONSHIP: Teachers talk about their successes and failures with a new model of teaching, reducing their sense of isolation;
- FEEDBACK: Teachers give each other objective, nonevaluative feedback about the way they are executing skills required by a new model;
- ANALYSIS: Teachers help each other extend their control over a new approach until it is internalized, spontaneous, and flexible;
- ADAPTATION: Teachers work together to fit a teaching model to the special needs of students in the class; and
- SUPPORT: The coach provides whatever support is needed as the peer teacher begins to apply a new strategy (Showers, 1984).

What are the benefits of peer coaching?

Teachers who work with LCD students can benefit greatly from a staff development model that incorporates peer coaching (Kwiat, 1989). On the one hand, ESL and bilingual teachers often experience isolation from their mainstream classroom peers. On the other hand, mainstream classroom teachers do not have the strategies and skills necessary to reach the LCD students in their classrooms. A peer coaching program helps bilingual/ESL and mainstream teachers to form the types of relationships they will need in order to coordinate the knowledge and skills needed to serve their LCD students effectively. Mainstream teachers can most easily learn new knowledge and skills and how to apply this knowledge in their classrooms from those peers who are more experienced or more trained in bilingual/ESL education. By experimenting with specific skills and experiencing success through coaching, mainstream classroom teachers are not only able to improve their teaching in such a way that all students benefit, but are also able to develop a more positive outlook toward having LCD students in their classrooms (Kwiat, 1989).

Peer coaching is a positive solution to some of the problems of traditional inservice offerings that have been used to educate teachers of LCD students. Instead of onetime workshops with no follow-up, peer coaching provides ongoing assessment of a specific skill or strategy that enables the teacher to continue his/her training in the classroom. This follow-up and continued professional dialog are particularly essential for mainstream and bilingual teachers whose educational training and philosophy may vary

widely. For example, inservice pertaining to the integration of language and content instruction could be followed by having the bilingual teacher observe his/her mainstream partner's classes with the objective of noting the presence or absence of particular strategies, such as the use of graphic organizers or the repetition of key phrases. In coaching conferences, peers can discuss individual and school needs and give and receive feedback about the specific skill being observed. Coaching reduces isolation by providing the professional dialogue that encourages teachers to generate solutions to their own problems.

When teachers collaborate for the benefit of LCD students, coaching is a natural outcome of the cooperative planning meeting. When a teacher works with others to develop an LCD student's educational plan, it is possible that s/he will suggest instructional techniques or interventions not familiar to the other teachers. By sharing instructional strategies and techniques, teachers pool not only their physical but also their intellectual resources. Such collaboration is especially important in enabling teachers from a variety of disciplines to become familiar with and value the contributions of the others. Even when a teacher is receptive to using a new technique and has good intentions for implementation, numerous obstacles may prevent its successful use. A structured approach is needed to ensure that the new instructional technique is not neglected or practiced incorrectly.

Peer coaching has the potential for furthering a teacher's individual professional development, improving school climate, and, ultimately, enhancing school effectiveness when a model appropriate to school goals is applied. Teaching strategies such as cooperative learning and writing across the curriculum are examples of topics that can serve as the basis for coaching sessions (Garmston, 1987).

How are peer coaching programs initiated?

Several approaches to initiating peer coaching are possible. Some peer coaching programs begin with two teachers jointly planning instructional segments in which new knowledge and skills will be applied. For example, a bilingual Spanish teacher and a science teacher could be paired in order to plan and teach a unit on sound that incorporates the language and culture of both English and Spanish speaking students. The school principal provides time for the teachers to observe one another as they carry out the instruction. Observation notes, videotapes, coded information, and narrative reports are prepared. The teachers review and discuss the data together. Actions that might improve the use of the skills and knowledge are explored. New applications are planned, observed, and analyzed (Ward, 1986).

Another approach assigns a teacher who is more skilled than other teachers to conduct model lessons that illustrate the use of new skills and knowledge. The other teachers, in turn, use the model on similar lessons to practice the new instructional processes in their own classrooms. Often, this model is applied by ESL teachers to demonstrate how language can be contextualized so that LCD students can comprehend content area subject matter. Model lessons and the analysis of what occurred both take into account the classroom context and the particular needs of each teacher (Griffin, et al., 1984; Schlecty, Crowell, Whitford, and Joslin, 1984).

What are some examples of peer coaching?

Four working models for coaching include: technical, collegial, challenge, and team coaching (Garmston, 1987; Neubert and Bratton, 1987).

- TECHNICAL COACHING refers to the facilitation of transfer from inservice training to classroom practice. This mode promotes collegiality and the sharing of professional dialogue and gives teachers a shared vocabulary for discussing professional views. For bilingual and mainstream teachers, this might include discussion of how specific methods (bilingual or ESL) would apply in their classrooms. For example, following inservice on cooperative learning, teachers could discuss how heterogeneous grouping would occur given the language groups and language abilities of students.
- COLLEGIAL COACHING shares the common goals of refining teaching practices, promoting collegiality, and increasing professional dialogue with technical coaching. However, it also helps teachers be more analytical about what they do in the classroom. The long range goal of collegial coaching is self-perpetuating improvement in teaching. For example, a teacher who is to be observed may want to learn more about how to improve in a particular area. This desire becomes the focus of the coaching sessions. The coach gathers classroom data on the teacher's priority and helps him/her analyze and interpret teaching/learning strategies while encouraging applications to future learning.

  An example of collegial coaching is given in *The CALLA handbook: Implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach.* In implementing CALLA, teachers are advised to keep a teaching log of class activities that can be discussed when meeting with their partners. Examples of categories on the teaching log that can be used to reflect on and discuss with their partners include student activities and types of instruction. In addition, partners are advised to use a checklist when observing each other so that follow-up discussion is focused on what actually happened during the lesson. Examples of categories on the checklist include "teacher's language somewhat simplified" and "students' prior knowledge elicited" (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994).
- CHALLENGE COACHING refers to the application of coaching techniques to the resolution of problematic situations. Teams, which may include teachers, teachers' aides, librarians, and administrators, work together to resolve persistent problems in instructional design or delivery. Challenge coaching often results in a formal plan proposed by all participants for the resolution of a given problem.
- TEAM COACHING is a variation on peer coaching and team teaching. Visiting mentors or resource teachers, instead of observing classroom teachers, teach right alongside them. These resource teachers should have considerable expertise in the methodology being used by the teachers they are coaching. The coach and teacher plan, teach, and evaluate the lesson as partners. Bilingual education programs funded through Title VII may employ resource teachers skilled in ESL/bilingual methods as mentors to either mainstream or less-skilled bilingual/ESL staff. These teachers coach their peers intensively in classroom settings to assist them in applying effective methodology for LCD students.

The success of team teaching supports the notion that people other than regular classroom teachers can be coaches. However, the coach should always be someone who is a peer; otherwise teachers may perceive the coaching as evaluation rather than collaboration. The importance of support and facilitation by coaches cannot be emphasized enough.

What factors need to be considered before implementing peer coaching?

Several preconditions should be considered before implementing a peer coaching system:

There must be a general perception on the part of the people involved that they are good but can always get better—that they can always improve what they are doing. This general orientation has been found to characterize effective schools.

The teachers and administrators involved must have a reasonable level of trust; they must be confident that no one is going to distort the situation in any way.

There must be an interpersonal climate in the school that conveys the sense that people care about each other and are willing to help one another (Dalton and Moir, 1991).

How is peer coaching implemented?

Once preconditions for implementation have been met, various strategies and procedures for implementing peer coaching may be used. One coaching strategy has been developed that provides a systematic way to introduce a new teaching routine to other professionals (Knackendoffel, 1988). This strategy shows the coaching teacher how to introduce a new instructional technique, gain a commitment from other teachers to try it, model the technique, and assist others in initiating the routine. Finally, the coaching strategy shows how to provide feedback and ensure maintenance and adoption of the teaching technique. Each of the coaching strategy steps as suggested by Knackendoffel are listed below.

Coaching Strategy Steps

1. Set the stage for collaboration and introduce the teaching routine.
2. Gain commitment to listen to the teaching routine.
3. Describe the teaching routine.
4. Model the teaching routine.
5. Gain commitment to try the teaching routine.
6. Offer assistance for initiating the teaching routine (give choices).
7. Collaborate on the effectiveness of the teaching routine in class.
8. Provide for the maintenance and adoption of the teaching routine.

This coaching strategy provides a step-by-step procedure to facilitate the effective use of new instructional techniques by other professionals. The process can and should be reciprocal across content areas so that mainstream, ESL, or bilingual teachers all share new techniques. The combined knowledge and experience of these teachers can enrich each educator's teaching skills. This sharing can also extend to other instructional and support personnel in the school.

Peer coaches, in a study by Showers (1984), regarded their access to a consultant through weekly staff meetings as essential to their success. For this reason Showers recommends that districts provide some means of ongoing support and training for peer coaches. This training should focus both on the content they are seeking to share with their peers and on the process of coaching.

Showers (1984) also notes that teachers and administrators must be creative in organizing peer coaching systems to free up teachers' time. In schools where teachers already have preparation periods scheduled into their work days, teachers can be organized into coaching teams for collaborative planning and feedback sessions. Some schools have used specialist teachers to release teachers for observation periods, and some principals have taken classes in order to provide observation times for teachers. In other cases, teachers have had to videotape lessons for sharing at a later time when live observations could not be arranged. In the peer coaching study reported here, substitutes were provided for peer coaches one day per week in order for them to complete their observations and conferences.

Like many educational innovations, peer coaching is more complex than it appears at first glance. To implement a peer coaching program that complements staff development and helps build a community of teacher scholars, educators will want to explore the following areas:

THE COACHING PROCESS: Typically, peer coaching models follow the steps of: a pre-observation conference and the establishment of observation criteria, classroom observations, data collection, data analysis, a post-conference, and the establishment of subsequent observation criteria.

COACHING VS. EVALUATION: Whereas traditional teacher evaluation typically implies judgement by an administrator/superior about an individual's total professional performance, coaching consists of assistance by a colleague/peer in a professional development process. Successful coaching programs can only be established in an atmosphere of trust and support, where teachers feel it is safe to experiment, fail, reflect, question, solicit help, revise, and try again.

SELECTION OF COACHING PARTNERS: To help faculty to trust in the process, teachers should be allowed to select coaching partners to form teams of approximately four colleagues who observe each other regularly. As members of coaching teams structured across departments or grade levels, colleagues become more aware of their common resources and challenges, and tend to focus their observations on the target instructional practices rather than primarily on lesson content.

TRAINING OF COACHES: An effective training-for-coaching program includes pre-coaching follow-up training while the program is under way. Training in coaching must empower teachers by helping them identify practices that impede movement toward collegiality and equipping them with an extended repertoire of coaching skills (e.g., providing prompt, descriptive, nonevaluative feedback).

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR PEER COACHING: An effective coaching program requires an active and supportive instructional leader (Kinsella, 1993).

What are some practical suggestions?

Six strategies that provide for low-cost arrangements for peer coaching include:

1. FREE TEACHERS TO OBSERVE OTHER TEACHERS BY TAKING THEIR CLASSES. Administrators alone, teaching one period a day, can provide about one-fourth of the hours needed.
2. SCHEDULE LARGER THAN CLASSROOM-SIZE GROUP INSTRUCTION. By bringing students together in larger groups, teachers can make time to visit one another.

3. ARRANGE FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY AND RESEARCH. Frequently, teachers need to locate and assemble information, study, and then practice instruction. Often these activities can take place in a library or a setting other than the classroom.
4. ENLIST VOLUNTEER AIDES. Aides enable a number of arrangements to be made that free teachers for peer coaching.
5. SEEK OUT STUDENT TEACHERS. Student teachers (and aides in some states) can be given limited certificates permitting them legal responsibility for students.
6. ORGANIZE TEAM TEACHING. Teachers may be paired not only for coaching but also for instruction. This would enable teachers to free one another to engage in peer-coaching observations and discussions (Showers and Joyce, 1987).

The preceding discussion has highlighted various models of peer coaching and has offered suggestions for implementing them. Administrators and teachers interested in pursuing peer coaching as part of their staff development programs are urged to further investigate the various models proposed, keeping in mind the needs and goals of their particular school. Finally, it must be emphasized that any staff development program, including peer coaching, must have the support and leadership of teachers if it is to be successful.

References

Casteneda, L. (1992). "Alternative visions of practice: An exploratory study of peer coaching, sheltered content, cooperative instruction, and mainstream subject matter teachers." Paper presented at the Third National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues: Focus on Middle and High School Issues, Washington, DC.

Chamot, A., and O'Malley, J. M. (1994). *The CALLA handbook: Implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach.* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Dalton, S., and Moir, E. (1991). "Evaluating LEP teacher training and in-service programs." Paper presented at the Second National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues, Washington, DC.

Garmston, R. J. (1987). "How administrators support peer coaching." *Educational Leadership,* 44 (5), pp. 128-26.

Griffin, G. A., Barnes, S., O'Neal, S., Edwards, S. A., Defino, M. E., and Hukill, H. (1994). *Changing teacher practice: Final report of an experimental study* (Report no. 9052). Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.

Hamayan, E. (1990). "Preparing mainstream teachers to teach potentially English proficient students." Paper presented at the First National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Students' Issues, Washington, DC.

Hones, D., and Gee, M. (1994). "Flying by the seat of one's pants: An intensive teacher preparation program." *TESOL Journal,* 3 (2), pp. 8-12.

Hudson, P. (1989). "Instructional collaboration: Creating the learning environment." In S. Fradd and M. J. Weismantel (Eds.), *Meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically different students: A handbook for educators* (pp. 106-129). Boston: College Hill Press.

Improving America's Schools Act, PL 103-382. (1994). Title XIII, Section 13001.

Innovative staff development approaches. (1988). Focus Paper No. 4. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Joyce, B., and Showers, B. (1987, Spring). "Low-cost arrangements for peer coaching." *Journal of Staff Development,* 8 (1), pp. 22-24.

Joyce, B., Murphy C., Showers, B., and Murphy J. (1989, November). "School renewal as cultural change." *Educational Leadership,* 47 (3), pp. 70-77.

Kinsella, K. (1993, Fall). "Quality staff development and peer coaching: Partners in educational change." *ARC Currents,* 1 (2).

Knackendoffel, A. (1988). "Teaming strategies." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Kwiat, J. (1989). "A peer coaching model for teachers of limited English proficient students." Paper presented at the annual AERA convention, San Francisco.

Leggett, D., and Hoyle, S. (1987). "Peer coaching: One district's experience in using teachers as staff developers." *Journal of Staff Development,* 8 (1), pp. 16-20.

Neubert, B. A., and Bratton, E. C. (1987, February). "Team coaching: Staff development side by side." *Educational Leadership,* 44 (5), pp. 29-32.

Showers, B., Joyce, B., and Bennett, B. (1987, November). "Synthesis of research on staff development: A framework for future study and a state of the art analysis." *Educational Leadership,* 45 (3), pp. 77-87.

Showers, B. (1984). *Peer coaching: A strategy for facilitating transfer of training.* Eugene, OR: Center for Educational Policy and Management.

Schlecty, P. C., Crowell, D., Whitford, B. L., and Joslin, A. (1984). *Understanding and managing staff development in an urban school system: Executive summary* (NIE Contract No. 400-79-0056). University of North Carolina.

Smith, S., and Scott, J. (1990). *The collaborative school: A work environment for effective instruction.* Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

"U.S. legislation—Title VII update." (1995, February/March). *TESOL Matters,* p. 6.

Valdez-Pierce, L. (1988, May/April). "Peer coaching: An innovative approach to staff development." *NCBE Forum,* 11 (3).

Ward, B. A. (1986). "Clinical teacher education and professional teacher development." In J. V. Hoffman and A. Edwards (Eds.), *Reality and reform in clinical teacher education* (pp. 65-86). New York: Random House.

The Directions in Language & Education series is published by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. This and other monograph series published by NCBE are not copyrighted; readers are free to duplicate and use these materials in keeping with accepted publication standards.

NCBE is operated by the George Washington University under contract from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs.

NCBE

The George Washington University